

INDIVIDUALITY AND LEADERSHIP REFLECTED IN RANDALL WALLACE'S *SECRETARIAT*

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Abstract. *Secretariat* is a movie which tells about the life of Penny Chenery in leading her Meadow Stable. *Secretariat* is the name of a horse owned by Chenery's family who can bring the business into success by winning many race competitions. The main character, Penny Chenery, is the person who continues leading her parent's business. The aims of this thesis are to describe the intrinsic aspects which are narrative elements (characters, setting, conflict) and cinematic elements (camera distance, angle, *mise-en-scene*, and sound) and to analyze the extrinsic aspect which is individuality and the style of leadership reflected by the character Penny Chenery in *Secretariat* by applying *Individualism theory* and *Path Goal Leadership theory*. The writer applies library research and social psychology approach for her research. In this research, the writer finds out that Penny Chenery reflects individuality and four style of leadership in *Path Goal Leadership theory*.

Keywords: *Individualism*, Leadership, *Path Goal Leadership theory*.

A. INTRODUCTION

Shawn E. Klein in his essay "*Community and American Individualism*" says that America is a nation comprising individuals and individualism (par 3, page 1). As said by Ralph Emerson in *Self-Reliance*, "To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, that is genius" (par 1, page 1). It shows that Emerson agrees with people who believe in themselves and do not influence the other's life. Americans also believe that they can reach their dreams by their own struggling without any tight interference from others. Being a leader is one example of the American's struggling for reaching their goal of life.

Manfred Kets de Vries in Tony Kippenberger's book entitled *Leadership Styles* states that leadership is an attribute containing a pattern of personality and characteristic behavior which stimulates people to be more effective in reaching a set of goal (2002:7). In short, leadership is a pattern of characteristic behavior and personality of a person who struggle for influencing members of a group to reach their goal. Leadership style is based on the behavior and personality of a person.

Movie can illustrate the society's life. The writer chose a movie to explain the topic about individuality and leadership above. The writer chose the *Secretariat* to be the object of research because this movie reflects individuality and leadership style. *Secretariat* is also a good movie which reflects the spirit and belief of a leader in her struggle for a goal. *Secretariat* is an American movie directed by Randall Wallace. This movie reflects individualism value and leadership style which are shown by the actions of the character, Penny Chenery. The power of her leadership can be seen from her strong belief and willingness in influencing other people to reach their goal. It is also shown that the character can handle every problem which happened in the process of developing her business. As a result, the writer is interested in identifying how individuality and the style of leadership are represented by the character in the movie. This study aims to describe the intrinsic aspect of the movie and to analyze individuality and leadership style of Penny Chenery in *Secretariat* movie.

B. METHOD OF THE STUDY

In this study, library research is used to collect the data. The main data and supporting data were collected from e-book, books, article, and internet websites. The writer also applies exponential approach for analyzing the narrative elements. As said by Guerin et al in *A Handbook for Critical Approaches to Literature*, "We designate this method as the exponential approach because the inclusiveness of that term suggests at once the several meanings of motif, image, symbol, and archetype" (1992: 197). In analyzing the individuality reflected in the movie, the writer applies Ralph Waldo Emerson's theory of individualism. The writer also uses Path Goal-Leadership theory to analyze the leadership behavior of the character in leading and influencing the other characters in the movie.

C. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Individualism

According to Adam in his essay entitled *A Perspective on Individualism*, individualism is the ideology or political philosophy which stresses self-reliance and independence (par 1, page 1). Individualism is a concept of American value. There are some theories of individualism. One of the theories is individualism theory by Ralph Waldo Emerson which the writer wants to apply in conducting this study. Based on Emerson's essay entitled *Self-Reliance*, there are three aspects of individualism which are self-reliance, self-

confidence, and non self-egoism. Those aspects of individualism will be used to analyze the individuality reflected by the character Penny Chenery in *Secretariat* movie.

- **Self-Reliance**

The first aspect is self-reliance. Self-reliance relates with self-responsibility. In his essay, *Self-Reliance*, Emerson says that every individual must know what are the good and the bad for him, so that every individual has to keep his responsibility for that. It can be concluded that if an individual has self-reliance in his own self, he also has self-responsibility. Here is quotation from Emerson in his essay,

“There is a time in every man’s education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till” (1841: par 2).

In the quotation above, Emerson explains that every man should believe in his own self and should take himself as his portion. Every man must choose what is good for him and what is bad for him, and he must be responsible for what they have chosen.

- **Self-Confidence**

Self-confidence is the second aspect of individualism. Emerson says that every individual will always be confident in every step he will take and in every opportunity he has been gotten. By having self-confidence, an individual can reveal his idea towards the other people, so that he can reach his goal. It is proven by the quotation from Emerson in his essay below,

“I shall endeavour to nourish my parents, to support my family, to be the chaste husband of one wife, - but these relations I must fill after a new and unprecedented way. I appeal from your customs. I must be myself. I cannot break myself any longer for you, or you... I will not hide my tastes or aversions” (1841: par 30).

- **Non Self-Egoism**

The last aspect of individualism is non self-egoism. An individual is part of society, so in order to get enjoy and comfortable life, he must care with society. Individualism does not mean as egoism, so an individualist has to respect the other’s opinion. A man who has non self-egoism can have a comfortable life, and he can also work together with the society

to reach his goal of life. It is proven by the quotation from Emerson in his essay entitled *Self-Reliance*,

“If you are true, but not in the same truth with me, cleave to your companions; I will seek my own. I do this not selfishly, but humbly and truly. It is alike your interest, and mine, and all men’s, however long we have dwelt in lies, to live in truth... if we follow the truth, it will bring us out safe at last” (1841: par 30).

2.Path Goal Leadership Theory

According to Robert J. House in *Path-Goal Theory of Leadership*, “Leaders are effective because of their impact on subordinates’ motivation, ability to perform effectively and satisfactions” (1975:1).House states that *Path-Goal theory* reflects the dominant paradigm of the leadership study through about 1975 in which the *Path-Goal theory* is a theory of task and person oriented supervisory behavior. This theory is a dyadic theory of supervision in which it addresses the effects of superiors on subordinates. It is also said that “the theory is called Path-Goal because its major concern is how the leader influences the subordinates’ perceptions of their work goals, personal goals and paths to goal attainment” (House, 1975:1).According to House in *Path-Goal Theory of Leadership* (1975:8-12), there are four types of leadership in reaching the goals.

- **Directive Leadership**

According to House, directive leadership lets the subordinates know what are expected of them, gives direction about what should be done, gives some understanding to the subordinates, maintains the subordinates’ performance, and asks the subordinates to follow all the rules in finishing the work (1975:8). It can be concluded that directive leadership always gives a clear guidelines to the subordinates and lets the subordinates know about the procedures and rules to finish the works.

- **Supportive Leadership**

According to House, “supportive leadership will have its most positive effect on subordinate satisfaction for subordinates who work on stressful, frustrating or dissatisfying tasks” (1975:9). It can be concluded that supportive leadership is the style of leadership which is always encouraging the subordinates who work on stressful and hard tasks. This type of leadership can increase the subordinates’ satisfaction.

- **Participative Leadership**

According to House, participative leadership always does consultation with the subordinates, then collects the subordinates' suggestions, and takes all the suggestions into consideration before making a decision (1975:11). It can be concluded that participative leadership always lets the subordinates participate in making a decision.

- **Achievement Oriented Leadership**

According to House in *Path-Goal Theory of Leadership*, achievement oriented leadership lets the subordinates struggle for reaching higher performance and confidence to meet the goal of challenging. It can be concluded that achievement oriented leadership makes the subordinates struggle for getting their goals (1975:10).

D. INDIVIDUALITY AND LEADERSHIP REFLECTED IN RANDALL WALLACE'S *SECRETARIAT* MOVIE

1. Analysis of Intrinsic Aspect

a) Characters

In this study, the writer only focuses on the major character and minor character. For the major characters, the writer will focus on two characters which are Penny Chenery as the protagonist, and Sham as the antagonist in this movie. Meanwhile, for the minor characters, the writer will only focus on two characters which are Lucien Laurin and Ron Turcotte.

b) Setting

- **Setting of Time**

The *Secretariat* movie tells a story which happened in 1969. In the introduction part of the movie, it is written "Denver 1969", so the story happens in 1969.

- **Setting of Place**

There are four setting of places in the movie:

1. Tweedy's home in Denver, Colorado
2. The Meadow Stable in Doswell, Virginia.
3. In the Racetrack
4. In the Kentucky Derby Pre-Race Press Conference

- **Setting of Environment**

The movie shows the situation of American society especially who live in the 19th century. This movie shows that in that time, horse racing is very popular, and many people are interested in horse racing competition.

- c) **Conflict**

- 1. **Internal Conflict**

Internal conflict occurs in Penny Chenery as the main character. The first internal conflict is when Penny's mother is died, and she must continue her parent's business which is the Meadow Stable. Without any knowledge of horse racing, she decides to continue leading the business. The next internal conflict is when she is disappointed with the fact that she loses the horse racing competition. At night, she cries because she also misses her daughter, Kate Tweedy, who is playing her drama. The background music of the scene in the minute 00:36:15-00:37:29 using *Silent Night* song supports the Penny's sadness expression.

- 2. **External Conflict**

External conflict occurs between the main character and the other characters in the movie. The scene which shows one of the external conflicts is in the picture 4.33 when the conflict is happened between Penny and Laurin. They lose the horse racing competition, and they become emotional.

- 2. **Analysis of Extrinsic Aspect**

- **Individuality**

- **Self-Reliance**

Emerson says that every individual must know what are the good and the bad for him, so that every individual has to keep his responsibility for that. It can be concluded that if an individual has self-reliance in his own self, he also has self-responsibility. This value is reflected by the character Penny Chenery. The scene which proves that Penny Chenery reflects Self-Reliance is when Penny comes to the gentleman's club to meet Mr. Hancock. Penny has made a decision to not sell Secretariat as she says "The farm's in bad shape, as is Daddy. But I'm not willing to sell it unless I get what it's worth" (*Secretariat*, 00:14:33-00:14:39) which means that she does not sell her horses even though her stable is in a bad condition. She has chosen what she thinks the good for her and her business, and she

will take the responsibility for that. She keeps her decision not to sell Secretariat because she believes that Secretariat will bring welfare to the business.

- **Self-Confidence**

Emerson says that every individual will always be confident in every step he will take and in every opportunity he has been gotten. By having self-confidence, an individual can reveal his idea towards the other people, so he can reach his goal. The scene showing the self-confidence of Penny Chenery is when Penny joins Saratoga Race Course in July 1972. She comes with Mrs. Ham and Lucien Laurin to give support to Secretariat and his jockey, Ronnie Turcott. In the race track, Penny is mocked by her rival in there.

In the conversation, we can identify the self-confidence of Penny Chenery by her sentence “His name is Secretariat. And he’s going to make your horse take dictation” (*Secretariat*, 00:14:33-00:14:39). It shows that Penny is still confident although her rivals mock her. She believes that Secretariat will beat his rivals and win the horseracing. In the end of the Saratoga race, Penny can prove that Secretariat wins the race with an impressive victory by two lengths.

- **Non Self-Egoism**

Emerson says that in order to get enjoy and comfortable life, an individualist must care with society. Individualism does not mean as egoism, so an individualist has to respect the other’s opinion. The first scene which shows the non self-egoism of Penny Chenery is shown in the dialog between her and her husband, Jack. In the conversation, Jack asks Penny to go home with him, but Penny says “Jack, I need a few more days here. I have to make sure Daddy’s all right, sort through Mother’s things” (*Secretariat*, 00:09:08-00:09:15) which means that Penny wants to stay in her parent’s home for several days. She still worries with her father’s condition after her mother’s death, so she decides to accompany her father first. This act shows the non self-egoism of Penny Chenery.

- **The Style of Leadership Reflected by Penny Chenery in the Movie**

- **Directive Leadership**

As said by Robert House, directive leadership is the style of a leader which lets the subordinates know about the procedures and rules to finish the work, and gives a clear instruction to the subordinates during the work. The scene which proves directive leadership

of Penny is when Penny makes her first instruction to the horse trainer who is Mr. Jansen. Penny scolds Mr. Jansen because he cannot work effectively and loyally as she says “So if you arranged a deal that gave them four horses at half their market value and they paid you back, plus an extra share on everything they made, that wouldn’t just be disloyal. That would be committing fraud” (*Secretariat*, 00:13:02-00:13:12). Penny shows all his mistakes which can cause loss to their business. Because Mr. Jansen does not realize that he has done many mistakes, Penny gives instruction “Get your things and get off my farm!” (*Secretariat*, 00:13:22-00:13:24), so it means that she fires Mr. Jansen. She fires him because she wants to direct the business into the betterment of the business.

- **Supportive Leadership**

Based on the understanding from Robert House, supportive leadership is always encouraging the subordinates who work on stressful and hard tasks. This leadership behavior style can increase the satisfaction of the subordinates who work on the hard situation. One of the scenes which proves supportive leadership of Penny is when she talks to her jockey, Ron Turcotte. In that time, she asks him to join the race as her jockey, but he tries to refuse Penny’s request because he wants to stop joining horseracing. Penny supports him to still continue his job by saying “They say you’re one of the best. You got a great touch. You’re great with young horses” (*Secretariat*, 00:38:26-00:38:30).

- **Participative Leadership**

According to House, participative leadership always allows the subordinates participate in making a decision. Participative leader always consults with the subordinates then receives all the subordinates’ suggestions to be her consideration before making a decision. In this movie, Penny also applies the style of participative leadership. It is proven by the scene when Penny discusses with her cousin, Hollis, and her husband, John, about the condition of the Meadow Stable. As Hollis says to Penny “We have to face the facts. To run a horse breeding operation, you need a certain touch. I’m a professor, and you’re a housewife” (*Secretariat*, 00:08:56-00:09:04), it shows that Penny lets him to give suggestion about their problem. Penny thinks about the suggestion before she makes a decision to continue the stable.

○ Achievement Oriented Leadership

Based on the understanding by Robert House, achievement oriented leadership always lets the subordinates struggle for raising higher performance and confidence to reach the goal. Achievement oriented leader makes the subordinates struggle for getting the goals and successfulness. One of the scenes which proves achievement oriented leadership of Penny is when she talks to Lucien Laurin about Secretariat's condition. In the conversation, Lucien Laurin says "If I'm wrong, then they will say that not only did we ruin the horse's chances at the Triple Crown... they may say we ruined the horse" (*Secretariat*, 01:35:42-01:35:52) which means that he feels rather pessimistic that they can win the race. Penny tries to convince him not to give up by saying "Red is not afraid. And neither am I" (*Secretariat*, 00:35:54-00:35:58), and she convinces him that Secretariat can win the race because winning the Triple Crown race is their goal.

3. CONCLUSION

In managing and leading her business, based on the writer's analysis, Penny Chenery reflects individuality and four leadership styles of Path Goal Leadership theory. Based on the analysis which Penny reflects the three aspects which are self-reliance, self-confidence, and non self-egoism, it can be concluded that Penny reflects American Individualism value. As an individual, Penny struggles for reaching her goal which is being a good leader to create a successful business.

Penny as the leader of the Meadow Stable applies directive leadership style, supportive leadership style, participate leadership style, and also achievement oriented leadership style towards her subordinates. She applies directive leadership style to guide the subordinates and the business into the betterment of the business. She applies supportive leadership style to support the subordinates who are getting pessimistic in doing their work. Supportive leadership style is also used to increase the subordinates' satisfaction in doing their work. She applies participative leadership style to make a decision, so that she can consider all the suggestions given by them before making a decision. She also applies achievement oriented leadership to build a higher performance of the subordinates to reach their goal.

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